

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 211412
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:PSBRIDGES/NEA/ARN:WNHOWELL:HM:MVS
APPROVED BY IO:CWMAYNES
NEA:MDRAPER
EUR/WE:MCRAMERUS
S/S-O SGOLDSMITH

-----057005 200424Z /23

R 190257Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PINT, LE, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH CONDITIONS FOR RENEWAL OF UNIFIL

REF: A) PARIS 24552; B) STATE 204806; C) PARIS 25539

1. WE ARE CONCERNED BY THE CONDITIONS WHICH SECRETARY
GENERAL SOUTOU OUTLINED FOR MAINTENANCE OF A REDUCED
FRENCH TROOP CONTINGENT IN UNIFIL ON A SHORT-TERM BASIS.
EMBASSY SHOULD CONVEY FOLLOWING POINTS TO SOUTOU, EM-
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PAGE 02 STATE 211412

PHASIZING IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO CONTINUATION OF FRENCH
PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL:

-- WE ARE PLEASED THAT FRANCE IS DISPOSED TO KEEP ITS
TROOP CONTINGENT IN UNIFIL AFTER NEXT MONTH. AS WE
HAVE SAID BEFORE, WE BELIEVE THE CONTINUED PRESENCE
OF AN EFFECTIVE FRENCH UNIT WILL MAKE A CRITICAL CON-

TRIBUTION TO UNIFIL'S SUCCESS AND SOUTH LEBANON'S STABILITY. WHILE WE SHARE THE SENSE OF IMPORTANCE FRANCE ATTACHES TO DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE GOVERNMENT FORCES IN THE SOUTH IN WAYS THAT WILL NOT INVOLVE THEM IN PROBLEMS WITH PALESTINIAN, CHRISTIAN OR ISRAELI ELEMENTS -- AND ARE CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE -- WE HOPE THE FRENCH WILL NOT MAKE THE CONTINUED PARTICIPATION OF THEIR UNIFIL UNIT CONTINGENT

PON SUCCESS BY A GIVEN DATE. MANY VARIABLES ARE INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT AND SUCH LINKAGES WILL ONLY COMPOUND THE DIFFICULTIES OF ACHIEVING A STABLE PEACE IN THE AREA.

-- WE HAVE NOT PUT OUR TRUST IN ANY OF THE CONTENDING ELEMENTS; WE HAVE BEEN WORKING TOWARD AN END TO THE PRESENT STRIFE AND STEPS TOWARD RESTORATION OF LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY. WE VIEW THE DECISION TO SEND THE BATTALION SOUTH AS AN ESSENTIALLY POSITIVE SIGN. WE HOPE THAT THE VEXING QUESTION OF MAJOR HADDAD CAN BE DEALT WITH AND THAT THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH WILL IMPROVE. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI LEADERS, WHO ARE MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT LEBANON'S CHRISTIANS, WITH A VIEW TOWARD ENABLING THE LEBANESE BATTALION TO HAVE A PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 211412

-- A BASIC NEED, IF LEBANESE STABILITY IS TO BE RESTORED, IS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO SHARE FULLY IN EFFORTS TOWARD THIS END. THE PRESENCE OF UNIFIL PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN THIS REGARD EVEN IF IT HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CARRY OUT ITS MANDATE IN ALL RESPECTS.

-- FRANCE IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE AREA BECAUSE OF ITS TRADITIONAL INTERESTS THERE AND BECAUSE OF THE HIGH EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FRENCH CONTINGENT. A REDUCTION IN THE FRENCH TROOP CONTINGENT, AND AN EXTENSION OF THEIR STAY ON ONLY A SHORT-TERM BASIS, WOULD BE VIEWED BY OTHERS AS A NEGATIVE FRENCH JUDGMENT ON CHANCES FOR PUTTING, OR KEEPING, LEBANON TOGETHER.

-- IT MIGHT ALSO BE DIFFICULT TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE FRENCH CONTINGENT, SINCE A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS WHOSE TROOPS MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, WILL PROBABLY BE CALLED ON WITHIN COMING WEEKS TO SUPPLY CONTINGENTS FOR NAMIBIA.

-- WE BELIEVE THAT IF WORD SHOULD LEAK OUT OF FRANCE'S PRESENT INTENTION, THE EFFECT ON MANDATE RENEWAL AND ON POSSIBILITIES FOR INCREASING UNIFIL'S EFFECTIVENESS COULD BE DECIDEDLY NEGATIVE. WE HOPE THAT THE FRENCH WILL RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION, AND DECIDE TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENT UNIFIL COMMITMENTS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

-- WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE RECENT FRENCH EFFORTS TO PERSUADE LEBANESE CHRISTIAN LEADERS TO BRING THE MILITIA COMMANDERS IN THE SOUTH TO THEIR SENSES.

-- WE APPRECIATE ALSO THE FRENCH DEMARCHE WHICH URGED
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PAGE 04 STATE 211412

THE MODERATES TO SUPPORT THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT.

-- WE WOULD WELCOME MORE FREQUENT EXCHANGES WITH SOUTOU ON LEBANON IN THE COMING WEEKS. WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS ON LEBANON, PARTICULARLY IN THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO CONSIDERATION OF UNIFIL RENEWAL BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN MID-SEPTEMBER. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE211412
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PSBRIDGES/NEA/ARN:WNHOWELL:HM:MVS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780340-0754
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780845/aaaabkul.tel
Line Count: 144
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 61ed5160-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 PARIS 24552, 78 STATE 204806, 78 PARIS 25539
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1684219
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH CONDITIONS FOR RENEWAL OF UNIFIL
TAGS: PINT, MARR, LE, FR
To: PARIS
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/61ed5160-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014